



Step 2

Read back over your list, saying each complete statement **aloud**, beginning each one with “I wish someone would...” As you speak them aloud, listen for one that seems to have particular impact for you. Do you feel, somewhere in your body, a resonance or tingling when you say one of these statements? Does your throat catch with emotion as the words come? If you don’t feel any of them as particularly meaningful, you might ask a good friend or loved one to listen to you read them, giving you feedback on which one sounds like it means the most to you. Try that one on, by saying it as, “I will \_\_\_\_\_.” When you know you have found the right statement, the one that grabs you by your emotional shirt front, you have found a Big Dream. It becomes the second character in your story.

Step 3

As Holly Near suggests in her song, “Planet Called Home”, you are now ready to “call on your imagination, as if telling a myth to a child”. In this step you become the actor—the “someone” in your Step 2 statement—and you write two parts of your story’s sequence: the beginning and the end. If you like, write the opening for your story by filling in the following blanks:

Once upon a time, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) had a Big Dream. She/He decided to \_\_\_\_\_ (your Big Dream).

You may prefer another wording for your opening. Feel free to write what works for you. Once your beginning is written, write a happy ending, perhaps by filling in these blanks:

In the end, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) was able to \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (your Big Dream) and the world was a better place forever.

You may prefer another ending; I invite you to write the happy ending that works for you.

Step 4

Between the beginning and the ending, there is a sequence of events that logically and inexorable links the two. We cannot deny that most Big Dreams are not accomplished in a single lifetime. They are “callings” to which we devote our time and energy, making some progress, and leaving a legacy that is taken up by others. A desire to end racism is a good example. Ghandi and Martin Luther King, Jr. devoted their lives to the cause and died before it was accomplished. Yet they have been and continue to be shining examples to others for generations following their deaths. One day, when enough individuals—well-known and unknown—have served this Big Dream, the happy ending will be realized; racism will be erased. Yet, each one who serves this dream must do so believing passionately in the happy ending, believing that it will come *as a result of the work they do*. And that work has a sequence, a series of concrete steps that can be accomplished and move the dreamer, one step at a time, closer to the happy ending.

If you will, take a moment to imagine the world in which your Big Dream is realized. For example, racism or poverty or child abuse is ended, or the waters of the world are clean, or there is a cure for cancer. Stand in your imagination in the world created by the achievement of your Big Dream and notice all its aspects. See that world spread before you, changed. Next, in your mind’s eye, look one year into the past and see what was

accomplished as the final step. What was the last thing you did before the dream came to fruition? Make a note here to describe that last step:

Now, I invite you to return to the present, to today. Looking at the blank page that is tomorrow, what is the very first step you might take, the first task you undertake, to move toward this Big Dream? Knowing that it may take weeks, months or years for you to complete this first step, describe it here:

Step 5

Now you are ready to begin to assemble your story. By cutting and pasting them together or by re-writing them, or simply by reading them in order, compile the beginning, first step, last step and happy ending for your story as a whole.

Yes, there are other steps between the first and the last. You may even know what some of them are. If so, feel free to add them to your story now. If not, let them evolve, knowing that you have made a beginning and can see the ending.

On the following page you will find some examples of these Faith stories from others.

Once upon a time, Carinn had a Big Dream. She had decided to end hunger and preventable illnesses for America's urban children. As a young nurse who also loved to garden, she convinced the director of the Planned Parenthood where she worked to let her plant a few mounds of potatoes and six rows of collards in the little patch of land behind their building. Ten mothers and their 15 children ate more and ate better that first summer and fall. In the last year of her life, the trust fund that would keep it all going forever reached its billion dollar goal. Carinn's plan for integrating community gardens with neighborhood health clinics proved visionary and easy to implement. America's urban children were never hungry again and no longer suffered from preventable illnesses. Indeed, the world was a better place forever.

For as long as he could remember, they had called him a dreamer. Paul's "harebrained scheme," as his college professor has called it, to eliminate air pollution from automobiles was, indeed, farfetched. But after he completed his PhD in molecular physics, he started his own research. Human teleportation—science fiction in his youth—became a reality, thanks to him and his team. And now reality was this: no more roads and cars, no more trains, no more planes, no more combustible fuels. The world was clean again, forever.

Once there was a woman of little faith. She stumbled dully down a dark path day after day. Then, one day, she fell into a deep hole. She fell and fell and fell through darkness darker than she'd ever known. Looking down as she fell, she knew, at any moment, that the deep dark would end when she crashed into the bottom of this dark pit and died. But then she heard a tiny flutter deep in her heart. *Look up.* So she turned her face away from the dark below her and looked up. And there she saw a spark, a glimmer, a speck of light. *Reach for the light,* said the heart voice. So she stretched her arms over her head, stretching them toward that little speck. And her falling slowed, and slowed some more. Then, suddenly, she was no longer falling, but rising; she was rising toward the light. *Keep reaching,* whispered her heart. The more she stretched her arms to the light, the faster she rose. The spot of light grew and grew and grew. She was swooshing upward toward a circle of light as big as the sky. And then she was in the light, bathed in the light. Light was everywhere. And she saw that she was not alone. Others had followed her; because she reached, they too were saved. The darkness was gone. And she lived happily—they all lived happily—in the light. Forever and ever. Amen.

Once upon a time, Jonathan had a Big Dream. He decided to end the abuse of animals. When he first started out, he was just a young teacher, telling children that dogs and cats feel pain and have emotions, just like humans. Fifty years later, he was author of more than 50 books for children and he had changed the minds and hearts of millions of children in multiple generations, all over the world. He would die before he knew for sure, but in the end, Jonathan was able to end animal abuse and the world was a better place forever.